



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

April 24, 2013

Dr. Thomas Rooney
Superintendent
Lindsay Unified School District
371 East Hermosa Street
Lindsay, CA 93247

Dear Superintendent Rooney:

I am writing in response to Lindsay Unified School District's (LUSD) request to amend its approved Race to the Top - District grant project. Between February 15 and March 28, 2013, the grantee held conversations with and submitted amendment requests to the U.S. Department of Education (Department). As you are aware, the Department has the authority to approve amendments to your approved application and budget, provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On March 27, 2013, the Department provided the "Scope of Work Grant Amendment Submission Process" document to grantees Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) indicating the process by which amendments would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Department has applied the conditions noted in the document, and compared it with the Race to the Top - District *Principles*, which are also included in that document.

I approve the following amendments, as described below and in the attached table:

- In reviewing its plan, LUSD concluded that building capacity among its teachers and administrators was more cost effective and strategic than procuring external contractors to complete certain components of the approved plan. As such, LUSD will hire central office staff and support teacher training, while scaling back the contractual support in the Curriculum/Level 4 Assessment, Professional Development, Digital Learning Platform and Publication projects.
- With the reduction of the Curriculum/Level Four Assessment and Professional Development contracts, teams of teachers will be tasked with developing curriculum and delivering professional development. LUSD believes that this strategy will build capacity within the LEA and help to sustain initiatives over time.

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- LUSD will not hire a Race to the Top Project Director. Instead, the Superintendent will assume this role. The LEA concluded that this arrangement better reflects the integrated nature of Race to the Top – District activities with LUSD’s overall education reform strategy. While the Department approves this change, we are looking forward to future conversations with LUSD about the impact of this change on both Race to the Top – District implementation and LEA operations.

The approval for this amendment is conditioned on LUSD including in its Scope of Work:

- A plan for how LUSD will select teachers and principals with the skills and capacity to develop curricula and assessment content and deliver professional development (*e.g.*, by addressing the recruitment, selection, training and support of those teachers and administrators tasked with delivering professional development and developing curriculum).
- Activities, milestones, and deliverables that measure the success of this revised approach (*e.g.*, by addressing how LUSD evaluates the quality of the curricula, assessment content and professional development activities).

The budget implications associated with these changes in approach are described in the attached table. It is our understanding that the amendments will not result in a change in your District’s performance measures or outcomes, nor will they substantially change the goals in the approved plan. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department’s website as a record of the amendments.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top – District, please do not hesitate to contact your Race to the Top – District program officer, Renee Faulkner, at 202-205-4012 or Renee.Faulkner@ed.gov

Sincerely,

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Ann Whalen
Director, Policy and Program Implementation
Implementation and Support Unit

Table

Project	Description of Change/Budget Implication
Personnel: Project Director	LUSD will not hire a Project Director as described in its approved plan and budget. Instead, the Superintendent will act as the Race to the Top – District program director, resulting in a savings of \$293,707 in Personnel funds and \$44,050 in Fringe funds for Years 1-4.
Personnel: Director of Technology and 21 st Century Skills	LUSD will hire a Director of Technology & 21 st Century Skills that will be responsible for integrating the Race to the Top – District curriculum and instruction work with the District’s technology initiatives. The District will allocate a total of \$342,816 in Personnel funds and \$79,364 in Fringe funds for this new position for Years 1-4.
Personnel: Digital Media Arts Specialist	The grantee will hire a Digital media Arts Specialist that will be responsible for digitally capturing and storing professional grade media products that demonstrate the use and impact of the District’s blended learning activities among students, teachers, and administrators. The District will allocate a total of \$287,571 in Personnel funds and \$131,050 in Fringe funds for this new position for Years 1-4.
Personnel: 21 st Century Learning Assistant	LUSD will hire a 21 st Century Learning Assistant that will be responsible for administrative duties relating to the 21 st Century Classroom, the PBS curriculum and the Common Core Curriculum. The District will allocate \$120,778 in Personnel funds and \$79,364 in Fringe funds for this new position for Years 1-4.
Personnel: Overtime for Teachers	A cadre of teachers will be trained to develop curriculum and assessment items aligned to the Level 4 assessment. LUSD will allocate \$86,956 in Personnel funds and \$13,043 in Fringe funds to support overtime pay for these teachers in Year 2.
Personnel: PBS Curriculum Specialists	The two PBS Curriculum Specialists described in the application will now be referred to as “PBS Curriculum and Instruction Specialists”. While both Specialists were intended to be hired by February 1, 2013, one position was filled on March 1, 2013 and the other will be filled by April 1, 2013 to accommodate the schedules of the selected candidates. The later hiring date yields savings of \$35,000 in Personnel funds and \$14,000 in Year 1.
Personnel: New Teachers	The six New Teachers described in the application will now be referred to as “PBS Instructional Design and Delivery Specialists”. Their role will be expanded to include providing “train the trainer” style professional development to teachers in the District’s eight schools in Years 2-4.

Project	Description of Change/Budget Implication
Personnel: Instructional Technology Specialist	The Instructional Technology Specialist described in the application will now be referred to as a "Blended Learning Specialist". While the Specialist was intended to be hired by February 1, 2013, the position will be filled by April 20, 2013 to accommodate the schedules of the selected candidates. The later hiring date yields a savings of \$20,000 in Personnel funds and \$3,000 in Fringe funds in Year 1.
Personnel: Internet Resource Specialists	The eight Internet Resource Specialists described in the application will now be referred to as "Blended Learning Support Assistants". The hiring date and job responsibilities for these staff will not change.
Personnel: Travel	Five District Leadership Team members will attend the Leadership Symposium professional development conference in April 2013. The conference will focus on topics including Common Core State Standards implementation, blended learning and the use of mobile devices in the classroom. The District will allocate \$5,000 to Travel funds to support attendance at the conference in Year 1.
Personnel: Travel	Ten teachers and administrators will attend the Mass Customized Learning Symposium professional development conference in June 2013. The content of the conference will help build the capacity of the District's teachers and leaders. The District will allocate \$20,000 to Travel funds to support attendance at the conference in Year 1.
Professional Development	In the Professional Development contracts, the District will procure consultants for fewer training days than was described in the original application. Consultants will train a cadre of District teachers, who will deliver professional development to groups of teachers in all eight schools. The change results in a savings of \$744,800 in Years 1-4.
Digital learning Platform	In the Digital Learning Platform contracts, the District will require less vendor support than described in its original plan, as District teachers and administrators, and the Digital Media Specialist will develop this content with external support. The change results in a savings of \$233,000 in Contractual funds in Years 1-4.
Curriculum/Level 4 Assessment	The scope of the Level 4 Assessment project has been expanded to include all of the Race to the Top - District curriculum work including those components originally described in the DLP and Professional Development projects. The change results in an addition of \$135,000 in Contractual funds and \$4,339 in Indirect Costs in Years 1-4.

Project	Description of Change/Budget Implication
Publications	In the Publications contract, the District will require less vendor support in creating publications and other content for the DLP. These tasks will be the responsibility of the Digital Media Specialist. The change results in a savings of \$45,000 in Contractual funds in Years 1-4.
Replication	The work described in the Replications contract will shift from Year 1 to Years 2 and 3 to align with the production of publications that will begin at the end of Year 1.
Evaluation and Continuous Improvement	After a budget analysis, the District concluded that it underestimated the cost basis for these contracts in its application. LUSD will add an additional \$25,000 in Year 1 and \$20,000 in each Year 2-4.